

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 11 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 1-10 as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for modifying an unmodified clay, in particular ~~a montmorillonite type clay, characterized in that the clay is,~~ said process comprising the steps of

intimately ~~mixed~~ mixing a montmorillonite type clay with an organomodifier selected from quaternary ammonium salts, sulphonium salts, phosphonium salts, siliconated ammonium compounds, highly fluorinated ammonium compounds, precursors of said salts and mixtures of at least two of said compounds, said mixing being done in the a presence of carbon dioxide (CO₂) under pressure.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the CO₂ is in ~~the a~~ supercritical state.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the clay and the organomodifier are intimately mixed before being brought into contact with the CO₂ under pressure.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein the quaternary ammonium salt employed is an alkylammonium salt.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein the alkylammonium salt is selected from the group comprising
tetraethylammonium chloride, tetrabutylammonium hydrogen sulphate,
didodecyldimethylammonium bromide and mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein the siliconated ammonium compound used is a modified
poly(dimethylsiloxane).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein the highly fluorinated ammonium compound used is
tetrahydroperfluorooctyltriethylammonium iodide.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein the quaternary ammonium compound precursors are an amine and an alkyl
halide.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein the CO₂ is at a pressure of 50 to 300 bars and at a temperature of 40°C to
50°C, ~~advantageously about 40°C.~~

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): ~~The~~ A biodegradable polyester foam prepared in the
presence of an organomodified clay using the process according to claim 1, having
a homogeneous substantially regular, fine and closed cellular structure.

Claim 11 (Cancelled)